PERSPECTIVE

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PERSPECTIVE AGE FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS

A REPORT ON THE FINDINGS OF PERSPECTIVES RECENT WORKSHOP ON AGE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS, HELD IN ZOETERMEER, NETHERLANDS

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PERSPECTIVE
AGE FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS

Across the globe populations are getting older and as a continent Europe has the most rapidly ageing population. On average people are now living twenty years longer than they did twenty years ago. In response to this trend the members of PERSPECTIVE recently held a workshop in Zoetermeer, Netherlands, on Age-Friendly Environments. The workshop was appropriately held in the Vierstroom Vivaldi 150 bed nursing home designed by PERSPECTIVE Netherlands. The Vierstroom Vivaldi is an exemplary design providing a welcoming, comfortable and homely environment for residents where they have facility to personalise their environment and where the building greatly facilitates interaction in a passive and proactive way with the community. Every detail has been thoroughly considered to support positive ageing.

The Perspective Workshop addressed two issues:

- **Age friendly urban environments:** how the living environment can contribute to a longer stay at home?
- **Age friendly workplace environments:** how the working environment can contribute to an extended active working period?

URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

The living city is a city where planning, urban design and architecture combine to generate an environment that integrates living and social activities in harmony with workplace and commercial development, transport and general infrastructure. Too often the design approach is predicated on the capacity of the fit and able-bodied adult and fails to address the wider spectrum of needs and limitations of the general population. Urban design solutions have the potential to optimise inter-generational activity assisting the creation of healthier and socially supportive communities. In mixing age profiles opportunities arise for mutual benefit: younger people assisting older with shopping and gardening, elder persons assisting with caring for children, sharing their wisdom and experience, providing learning support and recounting stories. There are multiple other possibilities for mutual benefit.

All people need a supportive environment. For the elderly, the challenge for designers is to go beyond universal access to environments that support social, cultural and employment participation for as long as possible within the community setting.

At the Perspective workshop members' discussion included exploration of different precedents in urban design. The traditional Spanish model of social housing comprising apartments set in multi-storey blocks around large communal courtyards with shared facilities - a swimming pool, hard play areas, seating and garden area designed to suit young and old recreational activities. A football pitch for walking football, a popular all age sport is a central feature. Combining a range of unit sizes from large family to single occupancy units along with meaningful external space potential is generated to foster community engagement and the interaction of residents of all ages with and in support of each other. It also provides lifelong residential accommodation within a single complex to meet family needs as they expand and contract and supports the building and maintenance of friendships within the community.

The World Health Organisation has identified eight key domains of influence for change in approach to age friendly environments:

- Communication and Information
- Community support & healthcare services
- Employment and civic participation
- Housing
- Outdoor spaces and Buildings
- Respect and social inclusion
- Social participation
- Transport

The regeneration of areas of decline within cities is an opportunity to create good mixed housing integrated within the city fabric. The advantages are obvious in terms of proximity to shops, services and transport. Architectural design must respond by generating

homes that give delight, are safe, bright, light-filled and secure and that foster and support community development, social interaction and inclusion.

Particular issues discussed included on-street hall door access which often contributes to isolation, anonymity and mitigates against community engagement.

Approaches through shared, semi-public communal spaces were considered to respond to these issues, providing opportunity to enhance engagement, increase security and be generally safer for the elderly. Residents have the opportunity to support each other and generally look out for each other. Awareness of the presence of neighbours and reliance on their vigilance often gives great comfort to the elderly living alone.

The inclusion of shared semi-public space for casual encounter and engagement needs to be tempered with 'defence space' directly at the apartment door or window.

The provision of external space enabling appropriate 'sport' and 'fitness' for the elderly within the landscape design of the semi-public shared space, for both hard and soft elements, enhances integrated activity. Sheltered sunny terraces overlooking shared and communal areas of activity afford delight to residents of all ages. Other issues include appropriate storage and parking for mobility aids, motorised wheelchairs and buggies.

The enhancement of the IT infrastructure of the home offers significant opportunity to discretely increase support to the resident. Alarms which are triggered by sensors when a person falls on the floor, or when a hall door has not been opened for some time are examples of unobtrusive yet supportive infrastructure enabling autonomy.

WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENTS

Adapting to new environments, be that for living or for working is a difficult task for everyone; for the ageing it is particularly challenging. While one can often choose one's home, this is not the case for the workplace, where settings are predetermined irrespective of age. These environments too often serve to emphasise the diminished capabilities of the older worker, rather than supporting their abilities and enabling benefit flow from this rich resource of experience and skill in the workplace. Time management is also very different for upcoming younger staff than for elderly members of the team. Expectations may become problematic without acceptance of these natural and inherent differences. Good design can significantly contribute to an age-friendly environment where the older worker can be at ease in busy and energetic environments which favour the sharing and redistribution of the experience both in dedicated spaces and unpredicted ways.

Large open plan offices with cubicles or bench-desks are not a solution. People are moving more and more in and out and within the office and office design is currently changing to suit new ways of working. Break-out spaces, hot desking, casual seating and spaces for informal knowledge share are rapidly being accepted as a way to optimise the use of expensive real estate and also meet the needs of the younger, IT enabled workers. Perspective architects believe design of age-friendly workplace can be assimilated successfully in a seamless manner into this environment. At our recent workshop discussion, we concluded that what is probably needed is more breakout or common areas arranged like living rooms; a number of "consulting the guru" rooms fitted out with comfortable chairs, warm lighting and hot desks located in a more relaxed setting alongside, or within, soft breakout spaces. Solutions could extend to include clubs or dedicated spaces offered to elderly people known to the business, where they could gather and socialise, interacting with people moving through the office or chat with and mentor staff. The possibilities to create age-friendly work environments are as wide as our imagination and our willingness to embrace this opportunity can extend.

All in all, at a social and professional level, interaction between young and old, and the transfer of competences is both stimulating and vital. Workplace design can influence much improved outcomes by offering some 'slow-spaces', where furniture, lighting, orientation, easy to operate appliances, amplified telephone or video conferencing equipment, computer screens that allow for visual enhancement and ergonomic keyboard / chairs, are readily available. One may argue that this is of itself discrimination by design, but we are of the opinion that such well designed and considered workspaces will be more accessible and user friendly to the advantage of all and soon become the norm.

Interaction between generations will be difficult to achieve as long as designers ignore the potential that can be realised with good considerate and appropriate design at both the urban scale as well as the more intimate workplace environment.

Although at present older workers' experience barriers in relation to Technology and IT, we trust that it will all become much easier as virtual reality becomes ubiquitous at home and at work. Resolution of transportation deficits, often an issue for the elderly may even be partly resolved as the IT industry seeks to generate automated vehicles of all types.

The Perspective workshop discussion also touched on the current mass migration of people into Europe and raised the question of giving older people a new social role acting as tutors for the new to-be citizens. 5,000,000 immigrants are expected in Europe by 2020; how will they learn higher skills and become useful for the economic system? Elderly people may have a central role here and the younger may benefit from their assistance.

IRELAND THREE SIGNIFICANT HEALTHCARE PROJECTS

PERSPECTIVE Dublin has completed two significant residential healthcare projects, with a third about to start on site in the coming weeks.

In Kenmare, Co. Kerry, a Design & Build competition-winning design for a 42-bed Residential Healthcare Unit for the elderly, located on an elevated 1 Ha site enjoys spectacular views across a valley below to distant mountain ranges. Three separate care units - a Mental Health Day Care Centre, a 22 bed household (with 6 bed Dementia Unit) and a 20 bed household with integrated Day Care Centre - are catered for. The facility is based on the 'Household' model, with clusters of private bedrooms grouped around living and dining spaces - all focused on surrounding landscaped gardens and courtyards, tended by the residents.

In Dublin, a new 17-bed Community Residence provides a home to low-risk mental health patients in the process of being reintegrated into society. The ground floors are given over to living spaces with shared kitchens that open to private gardens while bedroom suites are located overhead. These are highly sustainable dwellings with very high levels of airtightness and insulation. The site is located within an established residential neighbourhood to aid the process of integration and the buildings are domestic in character, forming a 'terrace' of five and seven bedroom hostels respectively. Each has its own entrance hallway and staircase, and all units are connected, at ground level, to facilitate ease of staff movement between them.

Construction work is also soon to commence on the redevelopment and extension to an existing private nursing home in Dublin. The development will increase the current capacity for residents within the nursing home from 87 to 120, and will ensure all accommodation provided is in line with best practice design for residential healthcare. Works will involve significant demolition and the construction of a substantial new building, arranged around a new landscaped courtyard, forming connections with the existing three-storey structures. The 'quadrangle' form facilitates ease of internal circulation and wayfinding for staff and residents. The bedrooms are planned in a series of 'households' at each level. Bedrooms provide single occupancy and ensuite bathrooms for all residents. Dining and sitting rooms, along with nurse stations for each household are planned centrally with views and direct access to landscaped spaces.

BELGIUM MAJOR CARE PROJECTS IN DIEST & WOLVERTEM

DIEST
The 'EZELDIJK' senior care centre is located on the premises of the former EUROSHOE site in Diest (Belgium) within the boundaries of the city's historical ringway. This residential care project houses amongst others service flats, facilities for short-term stays, a residential care center (105 rooms), assisted living facilities, as well as a variety of additional common amenities such as a 'Grand Café', public and multifunctional spaces, physio- and ergo therapy rooms, a hairdresser, offices, below ground staff rooms, service & technical areas and 3,500m² of underground parking facilities. With a total surface of 14,300m², this project is part of the largest city development plan ever in Diest.

The concept guarantees both smooth communication flows and easy cooperation between the different areas of the care centre, while at the same time preserving and safeguarding as much as possible the privacy of all inhabitants.

Both the interior design as well as the location of the service flats create a personal and cozy environment for each of the residents, which also include a wide range of customized services, and all of this in close proximity to others as well as to a healthcare facility.

Services rendered by PERSPECTIVE Antwerp include architecture, structural & technical engineering, as well as landscaping for the entire project.

WOLVERTEM
Located in a residential area near the village centre of Wolvertem, this residential care campus 'OASE' consists of a retirement home (76 rooms) and 74 assisted living residences, underground parking facilities as well as a wide range of additional common amenities.

The strength of the design consists amongst others in a succession of volumes and various open spaces intelligently combined and clustered on a rather deep and narrow plot of land. The lay-out has furthermore been thoughtfully designed around its inhabitants, housing the most dependent and vulnerably residents in the cozy, intimate, structured setting located at the inner side of the plot while housing the less dependent persons at the more vibrant street level.

The public spaces are all characterized by large glass surfaces which are all looking out on the courtyard and park, with the 'Grand Café' located at ground level.

The service flats have separate entrances from the nursing home, so as to create some movement on the premises. All flats are spacious, and boast natural daylight. They are furthermore wheelchair accessible and equipped with state-of-the-art technology.

Thanks to the proximity of the nursing home and ditto services, the service flat residents can enjoy living independently as long as possible. Additionally, customized care can be provided if and when necessary.

Services rendered include architecture, structural & technical engineering, and landscaping for the entire project.

ITALY CASIO ITALIA GOES TO OPEN AND INFORMAL OFFICE SPACE

Thanks to its expertise in the design of innovative office spaces, PERSPECTIVE Milan has been entrusted by CASIO Italia with the design of their new HQ's in Milan.

The process included a mix of traditional and innovative design proposals for the work space, multidisciplinary teams taking into account all process variables: management and compliance with expected time schedules and costs, organisation and optimisation of spaces, introduction of new work scenarios and balanced interior design solutions. Before dedicating to the real design stage it has been carried out an in-deep analysis of the physical space / existing installations and actual arrangement, by consulting with reference staff managers in order to understand the needs and examine the new possible working scenarios. These data have, then, been integrated and used as a base for the subsequent design.

Perspective Milan has been given the target of promoting a change from CASIO very traditional space organised into closed offices and team rooms to a new dynamic and open work space (only 3 enclosed offices for CASIO top management), stimulating from both work and internal communication points of view. The most awkward aspect of open spaces is the lack of privacy, which has been addressed and solved through a scenario that is absolutely new to CASIO: a mix of intensive structured open space balanced by an informal office area. This is a non-working area with special furniture where people that work in open space can go for private calls or network surfing by sitting on wooden stools or standing in touchdown areas, or even talking informally to colleagues or customers, by sitting in comfortable sofas protected by acoustic panels.

The characteristics nature of the available work space, with the reception area alone on the ground floor and a narrow and long office area (approx. 8m x 90m) with a single exposure, suggested enlivening the passageways, and re-arranging the building core layout for space optimization. Indeed, the toilet and support areas have been located on the northern façade of the building, so as to get maximum natural light for the work areas, located on the southern façade.

From a chromatic point of view, minimalistic 'tone on tone' grey and white combinations have been used for structures and walls, contrasting with the beige PVC floor and the dove-grey work surfaces of the working furniture. CASIO electric blue has been used in a very controlled way, "to give emphasis" by signalling rib intrados on the main façade, the downstandings of the corridors that overlook the open space and on the 45° inclined corridor partitions, thus creating the illusion of vanishing point perspectives and backdrops along the passageways. The blue characterises also kitchenette furniture and the reception area at the ground floor, where all furniture have been custom-designed.

SWEDEN INCREASED CAPACITY FOR A GROWING REGION

The Stockholm bypass is a new route for the European freeway E4 past the Swedish capital.

PERSPECTIVE Stockholm, together with landscape architects from Grontmij, are responsible for the road architecture of the southernmost part of the Stockholm Bypass 'FSK01 Kungens Kurva', located between Vårby Backe and Bredäng south of Stockholm.

The project encompasses 5km of the E4 and E20 freeways with two multilevel roundabout crossings, ramps, ramp tunnel entrances and the main tunnel entrance of the underground part of the Stockholm Bypass, including a subterranean air exhaust station and auxilliary ventilation buildings.

In addition, Perspective Stockholm designs bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including the freeway-crossing communication to the IKEA store, and a new bridge to the Heron City mall, as well as noise screens located on bridges and neighboring land.

Construction has started with the bicycle and pedestrian bridge, doubling as part of the regional technical supply network inside of the box girder, which is to be opened in the autumn of 2016. On February 5 the 55m, 120 tonne main span was lifted into place.

Construction is starting on two more parts and Perspective Stockholm is working on designs for tendering for the fourth and final part to be delivered in April 2016.

UNITED KINGDOM NEW PROJECTS ANNOUNCED IN HISTORIC LOCATIONS

PERSPECTIVE London has gained considerable experience of hotel architecture in historic buildings and locations. We aim to design developments that carefully build on the dynamic and culture of a neighbourhood, not simply preserving a place but allowing it to grow. Two projects we are currently working on demonstrate this contextual approach.

TOWER BRIDGE MAGISTRATES COURT, LONDON

We are lead architect and interior designer for the conversion and extension of this Grade II listed, John Dixon Butler designed building into a 198 bed luxury boutique style hotel. As well as knitting an appropriately dense scheme into a complex network of neighbouring buildings, our design restores and preserves the listed building retaining a strong sense of the building's original function, history and heritage. The fine facades at the front and side of the building, and the key spaces within the Court, have been restored. Two new discrete mansard roofs are integrated above the east and west bays of the main facade.

Currently housing a very un-neighbourly block of cells, the more utilitarian rear of the site has been regenerated by a new urban form. The extension incorporates neighbourhood amenity with a ground floor corner restaurant and delicatessen. Some of the original holding cells will be restored and reintegrated into the new restaurant areas as private dining rooms.

PARADISE STREET, OXFORD

Our designs for this new 150 bedroom boutique hotel in the heart of historic Oxford pay careful consideration to the heritage of the surrounding area and is directly informed by its location and industrial past.

The staggered building frontages reflect a key urban characteristic of the local area and Oxford as a whole, and maximise views to the nearby St Georges Castle. Alongside the hotel, we are also proposing a number of ground floor uses that would be available for both hotel guests and local residents.

Public realm is a key element of our design. Notable features of the proposal include a new central courtyard that will be open to the public, and new community access to the 'Wareham Walk' from St Thomas Street.

FRANCE NEW HOUSING SCHEME IN ISSY-LES-MOULINEAUX

Thanks to the recommendation of a contractor, PERSPECTIVE Paris was commissioned by a private investor from conception to completion of a new housing building. The project is located in Issy-les-Moulineaux in the west suburbs of Paris and the building permit is now instructed by the City Hall.

The lot is located in the corner of Villa Marguerite and the pedestrian access road to a kindergarten school and a nearby park. A housing building is erected in front of the lot on the other side of the pedestrian road.

The villa (name for the street) is essentially constituted of housing buildings in bricks and some townhouses. At the end of the road, a big modern housing buildings sites. Perspective France project consists to demolish the existing one level house on the lot and build a new five story building over the ground floor level.

Because of the location of the lot to the nearby environment, the new building was positioned on the street limit and leans on the shared wall with the neighbor, forming an L shape building.

This allows to use the blind wall and opens most of the rooms and balconies of the apartments toward the garden of the lot and the park, offering 'Green views'. Those openings had to be created according to the French Building regulations at a minimum of 8 meters of the school lot limit.

All the floors will be used as housing and the building is composed of 3 duplexes: Ground floor and first level, opening on the garden, second & third levels and fourth & fifth levels. The garden is only accessible from the ground-floor apartment. Part of the entrance level is used for the building hall, bicycle storage room as well as the building general rubbish room. The basement is used for the cellars of the 3 apartments and technical rooms (water and power).

The entire building has an outside insulation, and is built around many parts: the façade on the street side and the pedestrian way is composed of a vertical element being the staircase. There is a lichen color coating over the insulation. The corner part of the building will be cladded with pearl grey terracotta bricks. The material will help to creating homogeneity with the surrounding bricks buildings and will be in coordonnance with the modern aspect of the building. In order to create some animation the terracotta will be opened with 2 long opening with zinc framings.

On the garden side, long hand rails and balustrade to the balconies as well as blind paneling are creating some movement on the façade. Its color is also lichen as the main façade.

Finally, the upper parts of the façades on the 2 last levels are separated from the rest of the façade by a cornice and terraces or balconies. Pre-coated grey mice zinc is laid over those floors façade to remind of the regular zinc roofs in the Paris area. In order to stay in the permitted shape of the building, the fourth floor has a terrace on the street side and the fifth is only half used. The roof is not accessible.

Remaining façade being the wall on the side of the school, it will be treated as the rest of the façade on the garden, upper part being also treated with the same zinc color.

The garden will only allow for a high tree, the rest being garden for water passage to the soil.

PORTUGAL EVOLUTION: A NEW KIND OF HOTEL

Evolution by SANA Hotels is a new concept. It is not just a hotel. Its lobby is a space to meet and socialize, make plans and get inspired, work and surf the web, or just sit back and relax.

The state-of-the-art business hotel is designed for people who want to be connected, whether for work or pleasure. New technologies and multimedia solutions allow guests to be in command of hotel areas, bringing their home and office into the hotel.

Guests are welcomed by a news screen and a self check-in counter.

At ground level and mezzanine there are lounges and a food area with a selection of cold and warm foods and snacks available 24 hours a day.

A mixture of informal spaces, lighting and color changes create a dynamic ambiance. Futuristic floor corridors, curved pathways, dynamic lighting and colors set the pace. Open space rooms feature a centerpiece bed, plus work station and a complete bath with shower. The combination of glass, metal, and plexiglass furniture, with natural materials like cork and wood brings a balance to the interiors.

SPAIN RETIREMENT HOUSING ON THE COSTA DEL SOL

PERSPECTIVE Madrid is embarking on a series of new housing projects in the Costa del Sol region, as a direct result of the area's rapidly developing real estate market. The target clientele for the new developments are sun-seeking, retiree senior citizens from North Europe, with the Baviera Hills Golf resort in Vélez-Málaga a template project example.

The Baviera Hills Golf resort is being marketed by Salsa Inmobiliaria, of Grupo Mazacruz, with the development consisting of a 66 apartment complex located within an attractive, top class golf resort.

The hilly 8,000m² scheme hosts housing units arranged in seven different blocks, comfortably spaced out and adapted to the sites natural topography. The units are strategically designed to allow for unparalleled views of the surrounding golf course and also carefully positioned to take advantage of the best orientation in terms of sun access and exposure to wind.

The two storey blocks will consist of two and three bedroom units, with penthouse apartments on the top floor. Each apartment will have access to an underground car park with accompanying storage space and also to either large open plan terraces or private gardens with pergolas, optimizing the regions fair weather and promoting the ideal outdoor living lifestyle.

The total site area is 6,400 m², with open spaces between the buildings arranged on differing levels around swimming pools and playgrounds, helping to create a community amongst residents. Carefully designed retaining walls and landscaped green spaces help immerse the development into the surrounding environment while also promoting full pedestrian access.

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